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PLANTS LIVE AT THE ZOO, TOO!

MONTHLY GARDEN TOURS SHOWCASE LANDSCAPE AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

TACOMA, Wash. – Animals aren't the only residents of the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. The zoo is also home to hundreds of varieties of plants, which fulfill important roles at the park.

Join zoo horticulturist Bryon Jones at 10 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 2 for an hour-long garden tour to learn about many of the plants in the zoo's collection. As the Northwest basks in an unusually warm and dry summer, this month's "Drought-Proof Your Landscape" tour focuses on low-water plants, such as cacti, succulents, and yuccas.

The assortment of plants around the zoo "sets a stage for the animals," said Jones, who joined the zoo in 2005. With a master's degree in environmental horticulture, Jones has worked to cultivate a stunning botanical paradise at the zoo.

"It's always changing, which is how the natural world is," said Jones. "My goal is to show the connection between plants, animals, and people."



Drought-tolerant plants, primarily of the Southwestern United States and Southern Hemisphere, adorn Kids' Zone and others areas of the zoo. More than 40 varieties of bamboo and colorful flowers pop up in the Asian Forest Sanctuary, grasses and dwarf shrubs blanket the Arctic Tundra, and lush perennials and trees cluster in the Red Wolf Woods, just like the wolf's native Southeastern United States.

Plants serve a number of purposes at the zoo, explained Jones, from decorative to functional. Zookeepers use some of the plant growth, such as banana leaves and bamboo shoots, as food or skill-building tools for the animals.

Garden Tours are free with paid admission or membership and begin at the Pacific Rim Plaza, just inside the zoo's front gate, on the first Sunday of every month. Each tour will focus on a different theme:

- August 2: Drought-Proof Your Landscape
- September 6: Grow Wild—Attracting Birds, Butterflies, and Other Backyard Wildlife
- October 4: The Savage Garden—Growing Carnivorous, Spiny, or Wicked Plants
- November 1: Passing the Test of Time—Plants from Prehistoric Times
- December 6: Create Your Own Paradise With Bamboos

For more information on the zoo's plant collection and monthly garden tours, visit www.pdza.org/garden-tours.

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).